

THE CRITIC AS ARTIST

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atmosphere of the age. It is Criticism, as I hope to myself some day, that ^{point} makes the mind a ^{out} fine instrument. We, in our educational system, have burdened the memory ^{with} a load of unconnected facts,, and laboriously striven ^{to} impart our laboriously-acquired knowledge. We teach people ^{how} to remember, we never teach them how to grow. It has ^{never} occurred to us to try and develop in the mind a more ^{subtle} quality of apprehension and discernment. The Greeks ^{did} this, and when we come in contact with the Greek intellect, we cannot but be conscious that, while our ^{subject-} matter is in every respect larger and more ^{varied} than theirs, theirs is the only method by which this subject-matter ^{can} be interpreted. England has done one thing; it has ^{invented} and established Public Opinion, which is an attempt to ^{organize} the ignorance of the community, and to elevate it to ^{the} ^{dignity} of physical force. But Wisdom has always been ^{hidden} from it. Considered as an instrument of thought, the English ^{mind} is coarse and undeveloped. The only thing that ^{can} ^{purify} it is the growth of the critical instinct.

It is Criticism, again, that, by concentration, makes ^{culture} possible. It takes the cumbersome mass of creative ^{work,} and distils it into a finer essence. Who that desires to retain ^{any} sense of form could struggle through the monstrous ^{multi-} tudinous books that the world has produced, books ⁱⁿ which thought stammers or ignorance brawls? The thread ^{that} is to guide us across the wearisome labyrinth is in the ^{hands} of Criticism. Nay more, where there is no record, and ^{history} is either lost, or was never written, Criticism can ^{re-create} the past for us from the very smallest fragment of language ^{or} art, just as surely as the man of science can ^{from} some ^{tiny} bone, or the mere impress of a foot upon a rock, re-create ^{for} ^{us} the winged dragon or Titan lizard that once made the earth ^{shake} beneath its tread, can call Behemoth out of his cave, ^{and} ^{make} Leviathan swim once more across the startled sea. Prehistoric history belongs to the philological and archaeological ^{critic.} It is to him that the origins of things are revealed. The ^{self-} conscious deposits of an age are nearly always misleading. Through philological criticism alone we know more ^{of} the centuries of which no actual record has been preserved, ^{than} we do of the centuries that have left us their scrolls. It ^{can} do for us what can be done neither by physics nor

metaphysics.
It can give us the exact science of mind in the
process of
becoming. It can do for us what History cannot
do. It rym